

The Silas Hopping House
Park Street below South Orange Avenue
Florham Park, Morris County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, F.A.H.A., District Officer
135 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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The Silas Hopping House
Park Street below South Orange Avenue
Florham Park, Morris County, New Jersey

Owners and occupants: Mr. and Mrs. Ernest S. Lenning

Date of Erection: About 1787

Architect: Unknown

Builder: Silas Hopping (owner to 1808)

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: One and one-half over cellar

Materials of Construction:

Foundation - stone masonry

Exterior walls - timber frame, clapboarded

Interior walls - frame, plastered on lath

Chimneys - brick

Roof - gable, with modern asphalt shingles

Historical Data:

The identification of this farmhouse by discovery of the name of its original owner is a matter of deduction from the evidence provided by a search of the title as recorded in the County Archives and is reported as follows.

On 27 June 1769, the six surveyors of highways for Hanover Township recorded their agreement to lay out a road "Beginning at the Kings Highway, between the houses of John Hopping and Ebenezer Sayre", thence north 43 degrees west 75 links to the middle of the well, thence north 57 degrees west 6.12 chains and by four other courses through the meadows of Benjamin Burroughs, to the land of Ephraim Price and Ebenezer Sayre.(a)

(a) Morris County Road Book A - 62

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This road is evidently the present Park Street leading northwest from Ridgedale Avenue (County Road 14) in the village of Afton, formerly Columbia, in the modern borough of Florham Park, and on which street faces the house here considered.

The John Hopping mentioned above as a householder in 1769, being of Hanover Township, with wife Ann mortgaged his farm there on 22 December 1773 for 300 Pounds New York money, describing one of the two tracts as containing some 60 acres bounded southwest by the lane to Anthony Hollingshead's, northwest by Samuel Hedges, northeast by Moses Young and Thomas Cooper and southeast by David Richards, Ephraim Price and the Highway, and as "being the lot of land whereon John Hopping now lives". The second tract is described as being on the east side of Whippany meadows and as part of a tract formerly belonging to Thomas Chatfield and previously to Aaron Neel, on the road from the Hammack (swamp) "to John Hopping's Dwelling House". Likewise on 22 October 1786, this John Hopping and wife Ann mortgaged a 20 acre tract whose lines are described as "beginning at the Highway, near the well, thence west northwest down the lane going to the Hammock, to Silas Hopping's corner". Record is not found in Morris County of probate on the estate of this John Hopping of Hanover Township, and the names of his heirs are accordingly not established. Evidently, he was the progenitor of this family in this region, and by estimation from respective dates was the father of Silas Hopping mentioned above as owner in 1786 of the land next northwest on the same side of the road or lane from the Highway to the Hammock. Apparently, that lot of land had been previously part of the 60 acre tract belonging to John Hopping in 1773 as described above and as follows.

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By deed of 19 October 1808, Silas Hopping^(b) and wife Jorannah, and Joseph Hopping and wife Caty, all of Chatham Township^(c) conveyed to Daniel Hopping and Jonathan Richards of same place, for \$2000, four tracts of land there, being a 20 acre "Ridge Lot", a $1\frac{1}{2}$ acre wood lot, a 9 acre swamp lot, and a 20 acre home lot. The last is described as beginning in the center of the road leading from John Hopping's toward Ford's Hammock, and in the line of said Daniel Hopping and Jonathan Richards and John Hopping. Apparently, these three Hoppings were brothers and Richard a brother-in-law in a possible partition of the real estate of their father, supposed John Hopping first named above. Recital of title does not appear in this deed, however.

This same 20 acre "homelot" and the $1\frac{1}{2}$ acre woodlot were conveyed by Said Daniel Hopping^(d) and wife Martha and Jonathan Richards and wife Eliza to Charles Matthews by deed of 1st April 1814, all the parties being described as residents of Chatham Township, the consideration being \$1640.

(b) Silas Hopping and Joanna Miller were married 12 Sept. 1787 per register of Presbyterian Church of Hanover. No record of his estate in Morris County is found; probably he moved to the West. Ezekiel, John, Samuel and Silas Hopping, all of Morris County are of record as privates in the county militia or State Troops. (W. S. Stryker, Officers and Men of N. J. in the Rev. War. p. 635).

(c) Chatham Twp. created from Morris and Hanover 1806.

(d) Daniel Hopping, b. 15 Jan. 1770, died 15 Nov. 1857 grvsn. Hanover Chyd., mar. 1st in Dec. 1792 Martha (Patty) Stiles, born 8 Sept. 1770, died 10 Jan. 1826, and mar. 2nd Asenath....., b. 13 Jan. 1779, who died 13 Aug. 1847. (Gravestone Inscriptions, Whippany and Hanover, copied and publ. 1894).

This grantee Charles Matthews of Chatham, by his will proved 30 November 1855, devised to his wife the use of his "furniture in the house" during her lifetime, with provision for her maintenance, in consideration of her releasing all claim to lands previously sold to his sons Charles and V. M. Matthews, and orders bequests paid to daughters Harriet E. Freeman, Charlotte B. Ward, Andora Squire and Charity B. Ward, as also to grandchildren Augustus and Josephine, the children of his deceased son Edwin R. Matthews. He provides that "If any of my daughters should be left destitute of home, they are privileged of coming home to live in and have a room in my house and support from the homestead farm".

In a report of the sale of the real estate of Charles Matthews, deceased, dated 5 April 1869 seven lots are described including No. 1 - "Being the dwelling house", barns, carriage, house and other out buildings, together with about three acres of land adjoining, lying between the two roads", and No. 2 - (adjoining No. 1) being 13 acres of meadow and pasture on the north side of Columbia Turnpike, Chatham Township, and both sold to Clinton C. Hopping, highest bidder, for \$3050.

Clinton C. Hopping who thus came into possession of the house in 1869, with wife Josephine M. of Chatham Township, sold to Eva C. Tucker, of same place, for \$1300 by their deed of 1st July 1885, a part of the premises, being a 2.95 acre lot having a 591 foot frontage on the south side of "the late South Orange Turnpike" in the village of Afton**

(*) The house is indicated and marked "Mrs. S. J. Matthews", in the S.E. angle lot formed by the road crossing "Orange Turnpike" in Columbia District No. 3 on the map of Chatham Twp., publ. in Beer's Atlas of Morris County, 1868, p. 12.

(**) Columbia has for a year or two born the name of Afton, the change having been made to distinguish it from another village of the same name in the State. It is a beautiful part of the township (Chatham) delightful for residences and well cultivated. (W. W. Munsell & Co., publishers, History of Morris County, N. J., 1882, p. 137).

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and 455 foot on the northeast side of the road "leading past the dwelling house of Theodore A. Hopping, and the house on the premises here conveyed to the aforesaid late turnpike." From (Miss) Eva C. Tucker this lot and its house (here considered) passed to Mary Jane Tucker, widow, by deed of 12 January 1889. The last named also purchased from Clinton G. Hopping the adjoining small triangular western part of the original plot, being the segment in the angle of the two intersecting roads, by deed of 7 March 1892, and sold both lots to Hannah M. Pierson of the Borough of Madison by deed of 1st June 1910 describing the property as lying in the borough of Florham Park. The last named, being still of Madison, passed title to Samuel M. Anthony and wife, of Florham Park, by her deed of 23 December 1911, and they in turn to Lee R. Martin and wife of East Orange, by deed of 7 June 1919, who conveyed the same to Ernest S. Lanning, and wife Edith W., also of East Orange, by theirs of 17 May 1920. The last name grantees remain as owners and occupants of the house at the time of our survey thereof in December 19, 1940.

Reference:

Search of title in land and probate records of Morris County by James Hanlon, F.A.B.S. abstractor reported January 3, 1941

Louis D. Cook
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.
District Officer

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